

# Your local wildlife news



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## **BRADFIELD WOODS** 01449 737996



**Giles  
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Woodlands  
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Wild  
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## **Bradfield Woods & Stowmarket**

Bradfield Woods has again this year, proven to be one of the best sites in Suffolk for young people to connect with the natural world. Joanne Atkins explains how lessons learnt in the woods are now being brought to Stowmarket.

We were very relieved when the rain came in early summer, as the woods had been so dry. It wasn't so great for the two pairs of spotted flycatchers that were nesting near the education centre though: one pair in a tree, the other on a ledge in the craft area. They had been delighting us all with aerial displays of insect catching, and although they coped with large numbers of school groups, our greenwood gallery event, the rainfall proved one step too far and one of the pairs abandoned their nest. The other pair hung on in there, in their little cupped nest on the trunk of a small oak tree.

Having survived the rain and shortage of flying insects, we came in one morning to find their nest hanging in pieces from the tree. Predators! All was not lost though, as we were relieved to see one pair flying into a tree more recently with beaks full of

insects, hopefully feeding their young.

The wonderful thing about spending so much time in the woods, is that we see the changes. As I write this, butterfly season is getting into full swing, sunny rides attracting numerous butterflies including silver washed fritillary and white admiral, as well as bees, hoverflies and other insects. There are more benches in the wood now, so you can sit, relax and take time to enjoy the wildlife, or why not join us for one of our monthly Wild and Well sessions?

In the past year as well as running many events in the woods, we have taken our learning activities out into the community and have been running Wild Tots and family sessions on Pikes Meadow in Stowmarket. We will be continuing Wild Tots in September too.

## **Black Bourn Valley**

The natural regeneration at Black Bourn is now really kicking in, providing a refuge for wildlife and a real sense of old Suffolk wildness. Joe Bell-Tye explains how the team have been working hard to make this site easier to access and enjoy.


At Black Bourn the purring sound of turtle dove was heard again this year. It was a welcome return, although we believe the call may have only been a single male. Other species have appeared in stronger numbers, with 10 yellowhammer territories recorded on site and two lapwing pairs successfully fledging chicks.

What were once fallow areas are now beginning to look increasingly diverse as different grass species and broad-leaved herbaceous moving in and becoming widespread. Cattle continue to graze the wet meadows, their movements creating a

diverse structure that is key to wildlife.

Path restoration work has continued through the wet wood and a new, waymarked circular trail is almost complete. On this route you will be able to walk through varying ages of naturally regenerated habitat, a chance to see what happens when arable land is left from two to five years.

We're also looking looking to enhance the current footpaths and improve connectivity between new and old ones ready for visitors to explore the site in autumn.

 For more wildlife news, follow the team on facebook:

**Bradfield Woods –  
Suffolk Wildlife Trust**



## **Your most local reserves**

Black Bourn Valley ● Bonny Wood ● Bradfield Woods

Bulls Wood ● Combs Wood ● Mickfield Meadow

Directions & maps  
[suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://suffolkwildlifetrust.org)

# STOWMARKET WILDLIFE GROUP NEWS

Stowmarket Wildlife Group is part of Suffolk Wildlife Trust's county volunteer network. Led by local Trust members, the group organises events, talks and wildlife activities and raises money for the Trust, to help safeguard our wild and beautiful county.

## WHAT'S ON

Wed 25 September 7.30pm

**Talk: BUZZARDS**

With Zoe Smith.

Wed 30 October 7.30pm

**Talk: PESTS AND DISEASES OF TREES**

With Sid Cooper.

Plus SWT cards and gifts sale

Wed 27 November 7.30pm

**Talk: GLOW-WORMS**

With Tim Gardiner.

Plus **WILDLIFE QUIZ and RAFFLE**

Wed 26 February 2020 7.30pm

**Talk: TBA**

Talks are held at the Village Hall, Church Road, Stowupland IP14 4BQ. Entry £2.50. For full description of events, visit [suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events](http://suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events)

## A SPECIAL ENCOUNTER

Judith and Steve's land is sandwiched between the Museum of East Anglian Life and Tinkler's Meadow along the River Rattlesden. At 7am one morning, Steve saw a wild animal moving under the electric fence of their animal enclosure. They thought it was unusual by its size, colour and the way it travelled. They turned off the fence, but thought it might be injured from an electric shock, and searched the whole area. Though small, they thought it might be an otter.

Later, Steve heard a high-pitched squealing which he tracked to the log pile, where huge, black eyes looked out at them. By using a fish keepnet, they edged the animal forward and put a box over its head and successfully transferred the animal without any human touch.

The animal is safely secured, they rang the RSPCA for advice. It was agreed, to take the animal to the vet. The vet confirmed it was an otter cub which had probably been

separated from its mother and too young to survive on its own. After being checked over, the RSPCA advised taking it back to where it had been found, with a chance of being reunited with its mother.

However, on release it disappeared back into the logs, so they left food and water nearby. They even moved 2 fence panels, so they could observe the log pile. Later, as Steve went to the barn, he saw the cub moving in and out of the electric fence making high pitched squeals. Once again, they used the net and box to secure the cub and called the RSPCA.

An hour later, an RSPCA lady arrived and transferred the cub to her transport container. In there, it moved around and appeared uninjured. The RSPCA officer thought the mother otter was either killed or had pushed the cub out because she had too many to rear. Female otters live in a holt, often away from the riverbank, and hidden in a smaller area within the male territory. This cub was about 2 months old. It would have been helpless for the first 6 weeks, relying entirely on its mother's milk. Cubs are dependent on adults for over a year. Otters are shy, solitary animals, a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and fully protected. Therefore, it was agreed to ensure the cub's survival, it should move from the River Rattlesden valley and go to the RSPCA Wildlife Centre in East Winch, Norfolk.

The River Rattlesden valley through Stowmarket is designated a Special Landscape Area, perfect habitat for otters. The riverbanks have minimal human disturbance, appropriate bank cover and vegetation, clean water with a good supply of food, and secluded sites for holts. Although living near the River Rat for 22 years, Judith and Steve have never encountered otters. Sometimes, fish scales and bones have been found around their pond, probably evidence of otter visits. They now know the land is otter territory. They hope the river valley continues, to thrive as a unique, fragile place of biodiversity. Their rare wildlife encounter is a strong reminder that this hidden gem of a location is an extra special wildlife environment.

## YOUR LOCAL WILDLIFE GROUP CONTACTS

### NEWS & EVENTS

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### VOLUNTEER WORK PARTIES

#### Combs Wood

Keven Boyce  
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#### Bonny Wood

Peter Holborn  
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## MAGAZINES

**Delivering your Suffolk Wildlife magazine by hand saves the Trust thousands of pounds each year.** We always welcome extra volunteer deliverers. If you would like to help, please contact:

Hella Crosby  
01449 721226  
or

Sam Grange  
Membership Manager  
01473 890089  
[membership@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:membership@suffolkwildlifetrust.org)

If you would like to have a copy of the current newsletter or programme, these can be downloaded from:

[suffolkwildlifetrust.org/wildlifegroups](http://suffolkwildlifetrust.org/wildlifegroups)  
or by emailing us on [swtstowmarket@gmail.com](mailto:swtstowmarket@gmail.com)

## Volunteer locally

- Reserve work parties are a great way to enjoy your local reserves. Call Will or Giles for details.
- How about helping with events or exploring nature with children? Chat to Jo Atkins.
- Or join the Stowmarket Group team. Go along to any of the group events or give them a call.

 Suffolk  
Wildlife  
Trust

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